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The falling leaves

Joyce Rupp | Sep. 24, 2010

Like clothes, every body will wear out,
the age-old law is, ?Everyone must die.?
Like foliage growing on a bushy tree,
some leaves falling, others growing,
so are the generations of flesh and blood:
one dies, another is born.
Sirach 14: 18-20

The Falling Leaves
with a constant chorus of cicadas
the leaves tumble down,
from long, thin silver poplars,
they twirl to the ground,
dancing the Autumn death dance
beneath the great blue sky.

the leaves seem glad at the going.
(is there something I don?t know?)
Sparkling in the October sunshine,
they fill the air with gentle rustling.

one, then another and another,
on they skim down from above,

bedding the forest table before me
with comforting crunches and crackles.

this gigantic death scene of leaves
does not smell of sorrow and sadness,
rather, the earth is colored with joy
and the leaves make music in the wind.

why is this dance of death so lovely?
why do leaves seem so willing to go?
are they whispering to each other,
urging one another to be freed?
maybe ?you first and then I?ll follow?
or: ?you can do it, go ahead?
supporting one another gladly
in their call to final surrender.

I have not yet discovered the secret
of the serenity of sailing leaves;
every autumn I walk among them
with a longing that stretches forever,
wanting to face that death-dance
and the truth of my own mortality.

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